



NEWS RELEASE

Pueblo Chemical Depot



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Depot employee to participate in NYC Veterans Day Parade

PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT, Colo.—A Pueblo Chemical Depot employee is part of a female military Color Guard invited to march as a Color Guard in the New York City Veterans Day Parade; the first female Native American military Color Guard to march in Native American regalia.

Mitchelene BigMan recently retired from the U.S. Army at Fort Carson as Sgt. First Class and works as administrative assistant to the Director of Emergency Services at Pueblo Chemical Depot. She, along with Fort Carson Staff Sgt. Toni Eaglefeathers and Staff Sgt. Cindy Darrington, all Iraqi Freedom Veterans, will travel together to NYC for the November 11th televised event and also Present the Colors on November 10th at Times Square.

The three Soldiers hadn't planned creating a Color Guard Team but were good friends. They attended a Native American Powwow last March in Denver and were getting ready for grand entry to show off their new dresses when an Elder approached them and told them that they should be part of the Color Guard since they were veterans.

"I told the Elder that we weren't in uniform, but she said that our dresses speak more than a uniform, because we have our rank, combat patches, Iraqi Freedom patch and U.S. Flag sewn on them," said BigMan.

The Fort Carson Soldiers were getting ready to enter the arena when the arena directors approached them and asked for their names, ranks and what their Color Guard team was called. "We were a little surprised," said BigMan. "We were placed last among the teams and when the Master of Ceremonies introduced us, he said that in all of the Powwows he attended, he had never seen an all-female Native American Color Guard. The MC said we made history that day. The response was so awesome. They announced our names, ranks and the nation we represented and gave us the name 'Army Women's Iraqi Freedom Veterans Color Guard.' We all cried, we didn't expect the massive response from the crowd," said BigMan.

Since then, the Color Guard team has been invited to participate at other events in the region. Mitchelene (Mitch) BigMan recently retired from the Army and is a member of the Crow Nation, Toni Eaglefeathers is Northern Cheyenne and Cindy Darrington is Navajo.

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The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) with headquarters at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., stores the nation's aging chemical weapons and develops programs aimed at effectively treating and ultimately eliminating chemical warfare materiel. For more information about CMA and its programs, visit www.cma.army.mil.

Cut Lines for photos

Pueblo Chemical Depot Employee Mitchelene (Mitch) BigMan is part of the first military all female Native American Color Guard invited to participate at the NYC Veterans' Day Parade on November 11. *Photo by Jim Kelly Photography*

Army Woman's Iraqi Freedom Veterans Color Guard. (L to R) Retired Sgt. 1st Class Mitchelene BigMan, Staff Sgt. Toni Eaglefeathers and Staff Sgt. Cindy Darrington. *Photo by Jim Kelly Photography*